



**George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Salt Lake City VA Health Care System**

PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM TRAINING PROGRAM

I. Eligibility Requirements:

- a. US Citizenship
- b. Enrollment in an APA accredited Ph.D. or Psy.D. program in counseling or clinical psychology
- c. Completion of at least two years of graduate training with preference for students who have also completed at least one year of practicum training.
- d. Enrollment in graduate level practicum/clerkship credit hours at respective university during the entire VA practicum
- e. Commitment for at least 9 months to allow for sufficient training experience
- f. Good standing in graduate program

II. Application Requirements:

- a. Copy of transcript
- b. Curriculum Vita (please include full contact information, i.e., e-mail, phone, and preferred mailing address)
- c. Letter of interest indicating training goals, rotation preference, and statement of commitment for 9 months
- d. A writing sample, preferably indicating case-conceptualization skills
- e. Approval letter from graduate program Training Director verifying applicants' preparedness for practicum placement at the VA

III. Application Process:

- a. Submit the above required documents to the field practicum/externship faculty at your academic department who will in turn forward all applications to the VA Psychology Practicum Program Director (see address below), by March 1, 2016. Early submission is highly recommended.

Jinna Lee, Ph.D.
VA SLC Health Care System (660/116 OP)
500 Foothill Drive
SLV, UT 84148
Jinna.lee@va.gov
801-582-1565, Ext. 2723

- b. In person-interviews with potential practicum supervisors early to mid-March. You will be contacted regarding the specific date and time.

- c. Letter of acceptance will be mailed at the end of March. The letter will include follow up instructions regarding completion of HR process, appointment with individual supervisors, and Mental Health orientation.

IV. Supervision:

- a. One hour of individual supervision per week by primary supervisor, i.e., licensed staff psychologists
- b. Depending on the rotation, possibly an additional hour of supervision per week provided by Postdoctoral Fellows or interns other staff members
- c. Depending on the rotation, monthly **group supervision**

V. Additional Training Opportunities:

- a. Practicum students are invited to some additional trainings that are offered to predoctoral interns, postdoctoral fellows, and staff members.

VI. Patient Information:

- a. Practicum students are permitted to utilize case information (completely devoid of any identifying information) drawn from their veteran patients for academic and professional development purposes in their graduate programs. It is our policy NOT to allow any tapes of sessions or testing material to leave the medical center due to confidentiality and privacy.

VII. Available Rotations:

A. First-year Practicum

- a. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Team
- b. Cognitive Assessment/Polytrauma
- c. Behavioral Health/Primary Care
- d. General Outpatient Mental Health
- e. Neurocognitive Assessment
- f. Dialectic Behavioral Therapy

B. Advanced Practicum

- a. Post Deployment Integrated Clinical Care
- b. Second Year/Advanced Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Team
- c. VITAL (Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership)

Below are descriptions of rotations as provided by rotation supervisors.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Rotation:

Supervisors:

Steven Allen, Ph.D.
James Asbrand, Ph.D.
Jacek Brewczynski, Ph.D.
Jinna Lee, Ph.D.
Tom Mullin, Ph.D.
Gita Rakhsha, Ph.D.

Prerequisites:

Completion of two years of graduate studies including one year of clinical practicum experience.

Hours:

Minimum 8-12 hours a week. Must be available on Tuesdays from 10 to about 3 p.m.

Population:

The population includes veterans who served in WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and humanitarian and peace keeping missions.

Referrals/Presenting Problems:

Veterans are referred via numerous sources including civilian, VA, and military sources. Although referred specifically for PTSD assessment and treatment, a wide range of presenting difficulties are encountered including both Axis I and Axis II conditions including depression, anxiety, psychosis, substance abuse, adjustment disorders, and life transition issues.

Clerkship/Practicum Experience:

The PTSD Clinical Team (PCT) is designed to provide assessment and treatment for military related PTSD. Sources of PTSD are primarily combat-related, but may also include military sexual trauma or other untoward events occurring during the military service, such as motor vehicle accidents or physical assaults. Goals for practicum students at the completion of this rotation are to have developed diagnostic skills in the assessment of military related PTSD, including acquisition of basic differential & dual diagnostic knowledge. Additionally, there are opportunities to acquire experience in developing treatment plans, and gain exposure to group and individual psychotherapy for PTSD including evidence based therapies such as Cognitive Processing Therapy. Students may have multidisciplinary experiences as typically trainees from several disciplines, such as social work and psychiatry also receive training in the PCT along with psychology interns and practicum students from local universities

Training:

Initial didactic PTSD assessment trainings will be conducted prior to students conducting assessments. Clinical observations and supervised assessment experience will also be an integral part of training. During group supervision on-going assessment training and additional topical issues such as psychopharmacology will be presented. Additionally,

practicum students are invited to many of the didactic trainings offered to predoctoral interns, Postdoctoral Pub Club presentations, and staff trainings.

Supervision:

Weekly one hour individual supervision with primary supervisor. Possible additional one hour individual supervision with Postdoctoral Fellows. Monthly group supervision.

Polytrauma Rotation (Neuro/Rehab)**Supervisor:**

Harrison Weinstein, PhD

801-582-1565 ext 2326

Harrison.Weinstein@va.gov

Prerequisites:

Academic course/previous experience in neuropsych/cognitive assessment is preferred. Prior experience with therapy and clinical interviewing is necessary.

Hours:

Minimum 10-12 hours a week. Must have one day where 7 hours can be spent on campus.

Population:

The population includes veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan in combat zones who suffer from traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The majority of these vets are male and range in age from 19-56. Might also evaluate other era vets with PTSD and co-morbid medical and cognitive issues.

Referrals/Presenting Problems:

Presenting problems include traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, dementia, readjustment concerns and alcohol and substance abuse. Assessment referrals entail evaluating for traumatic brain injury and co-morbid psychiatric issues and assessing current level of cognitive functioning to help inform treatment planning, vocational rehabilitation goals and need for academic accommodations.

Clerkship/Practicum Experience:

1. **Neuropsychological Assessment:** Will conduct diagnostic interviews and neuropsychological assessments to OEF/OIF soldiers returning from combat who suffer from both TBI and PTSD. Will provide feedback to patient and families as well as to referral sources.
2. **TBI/Polytrauma Clinic Involvement:** After independence with neuropsychological assessment responsibilities, students may participate in the TBI Evaluation Clinic on Wednesday afternoons 11:30-4:30pm. This experience will provide an opportunity to work on an interdisciplinary outpatient neuro-rehabilitation team, conducting assessments of mild traumatic brain injury.

3. **Veteran's Caregiver Clinic:** If interested, students are welcome to participate in assessing veteran's suitability for the Caregiver Program. Additional opportunities are available in caregiver support and program development. Veterans in this rotation vary greatly, but the most common referrals are for PTSD and TBI. This experience provides the opportunity to work with an interdisciplinary team.

Supervision:

Weekly individual and possibility for group supervision.

Example Testing Battery:

Polytrauma Structured Interview; ASSIST; MPAI; BPI; PTSD-Checklist (civilian version); HIT-6; Unit Support; Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index; Satisfaction with Life; NSI; TOMM: response time of time 1 and 2; WAIS-IV: Digit Span, Symbol Search, Visual Puzzles, Digit Symbol Coding, Information, Similarities; COWA (FAS and animals); TOMM; Rey 15; PASAT-trial 1 and 2; Rey 15; WMT; CVLT; Trails A & B; Stroop; RCFT; WRAT-reading; WCST; MMPI; BNT; JLO; SCT; WMS-IV: Logical Memory I&II, Designs I&II.

Inpatient Mental Health Consult/Liaison Team Rotation

Supervisor:

Tracy Black Ph.D.

(801) 582-1565 x2087

tracy.black-cecchini@va.gov

The Mental Health Consult Team is an interdisciplinary team consisting of Psychology, Psychiatry, Clinical Pharmacy and several other rotating residents from both mental health and medical disciplines. This team provides mental health services to patients within inpatient medical settings including Acute Medicine, Surgery, Neurology, Telemetry, Dialysis, and Intensive Care Units by utilizing a consultation/liaison model. Common referral issues include medical decision-making capacity, cognitive functioning, adjustment to illness, evaluation/management of psychiatric symptoms (e.g. depression, anxiety, psychosis), and substance abuse/detoxification. Practicum students, along with supervising staff psychologist, participate in patient-centered rounds, conduct diagnostic evaluations, administer neuropsychological screening, and provide supportive psychotherapy.

Prerequisites:

Academic course in health psychology is preferred. Prior experience with therapy and clinical interviewing is necessary.

Hours:

Minimum 10 hours a week. Preferably 2 days in a row so that continuity across patients can be maintained. Two half days, mornings would be ideal. Team rounds occur at 9:00am .

Supervision:

Weekly individual and group supervision during team rounds.

Cognitive Assessment/Neuropsychology Rotation

Supervisor:

Patrick Miler, Ph.D.
801-582-1565 ext 4572
patrick.miller@va.gov

Prerequisites:

Academic courses and prior experience in psychological testing and neuropsychology preferred. Prior experience with clinical interviewing is necessary.

Hours:

Minimum 10-12 hours/week. Must be able to spend up to 6 hours on VA campus one day each week to perform assessments.

Population:

The population includes veterans referred for cognitive assessment by providers throughout the Medical Center, including Outpatient Mental Health, Primary Care Clinics, Neurology Clinics, and Geriatrics Clinics. The majority of patients referred are male and range in age from 20's to 80's. Patient diagnoses include history of traumatic brain injury, suspected dementia, history of stroke, Parkinson's Disease, and other conditions affecting the brain.

Practicum Experience:

Will conduct diagnostic interviews and administer various neuropsychological testing instruments. Will provide feedback to patient and primary support person(s) as well as to referral sources.

Supervision:

Weekly individual supervision and, schedule permitting, may also attend weekly group supervision with pre-doctoral interns.

General Outpatient Mental Health Clinic Rotation:

Supervisors:

Edward Varra, Ph.D.
801-582-1565 x2712
Edward.Varra@va.gov

Tom Aikins, Ph.D.
801-582-1565 x2336
Thomas.Aikins@va.gov

Prerequisites:

Completion of a graduate level psychopathology course, familiarity with DSM diagnoses. Some experience with psychotherapy is necessary.

Hours:

8-12 hours a week preferred.

Population/ Presenting Problems:

The Outpatient Mental Health Clinic serves both male and female Veterans of any era presenting with a wide array of problems. The most common problems seen include mood disorders, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, chemical abuse/dependency, psychotic disorders, and relationship problems. Many Veterans present with multiple and complex problems reflecting various axis I and II diagnoses and problems in living.

Clerkship/Practicum Experience:

The focus of a practicum in the Outpatient Mental Health Clinic is to provide a structured and supportive opportunity for the student to develop diagnostic and treatment skills in a general outpatient mental health setting. Specific goals for this experience will be discussed with the supervisor at the outset of the practicum. Opportunities that exist include diagnostic interviewing and assessment, individual psychotherapy, and co-facilitating group psychotherapy.

Supervision:

Weekly one hour individual supervision with primary supervisor. Monthly group supervision.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Rotation:**Supervisor:**

Michael Tragakis, Ph.D.

801-582-1565 x2786

michael.tragakis@va.gov

Prerequisites:

Practicum students need to have completed a graduate level psychopathology course and have familiarity with DSM5 diagnoses. Some experience with Behavioral/Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is required.

Hours:

8-12 hours a week

NOTE: The ability to offer extended hours for psychotherapy support is required in delivering this therapy

Duration:

This is a **TWO-YEAR** practicum experience, allowing the practicum student to gain facility and experience with the most acute clients seen in our clinic.

Population/ Presenting Problems:

The DBT clinic is part of the general outpatient mental health clinic, serving both male and female Veterans of any era. Veterans who are seen by the DBT team suffer from severe emotional dysregulation, which leads to chronic suicidality, self-harm and

substance abuse. These are individuals who are often diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder and are high utilizers of inpatient psychiatric hospitalization and emergency room services. In addition, the majority of clients treated with DBT are those who have unitary or complex trauma histories, where DBT is aimed at helping the individual become emotionally and behaviorally prepared to engage in treatment for PTSD.

Clerkship/Practicum Experience:

During the first year of the practicum, practicum students gain a foundation with the philosophy, structure and goals of DBT treatment, to include weekly readings and discussions. DBT skills group and diagnostic assessments targeting mood and BPD symptoms are also a focus during the first year. During the second half of the first year, practicum students will also take on an individual psychotherapy client. Conducting effective liaison work with outpatient and inpatient mental health staff is an essential facet of care for individuals in this modality.

During the second year of the practicum, assessments decrease in frequency and the trainee begins to take on multiple and more acute DBT clients for individual DBT psychotherapy. Trainees can conduct Stage II DBT during this second year, learning the evidence-based treatment for PTSD Prolonged Exposure (PE). Developing strength in DBT case formulation becomes an emphasis during this second year. Trainees continue facilitating DBT skills group and begin to offer peer mentorship to the junior practicum student, as well as staff new to the modality. In addition, students can opt to co-facilitate a process group for DBT program graduates, incorporating discussion of readings from Yalom and colleagues on interpersonal process.

Supervision:

Weekly one hour individual supervision with primary supervisor. Weekly DBT team consultation. Ad-hoc peer mentorship as requested.

Advanced Practicum

Post-Deployment Integrated Care Center (OEF/OIF Rotation):

The Post-deployment OEF/OIF rotation is an advanced practicum opportunity for trainees that have completed other practicum training at the SLC VA. This rotation is situated in a specialized primary care clinic that provides wraparound medical, psychological, and case management services for veterans returning recently from a combat deployment. Typical clinical duties include rapid diagnostic assessment, screening for acute mental health concerns, motivational interviewing and working collaboratively with the physician and social worker for a tailored care plan. Important clinical skills emphasized are adapting your interventions based upon individual patient need, broad conceptualization skills to create interdisciplinary treatment plans, and rapidly building rapport among a population wherein seeking mental health care is highly stigmatized. You can expect 4-8 hours. The details of this rotation can be arranged with Dr. Ashley Greenwell who supervises this rotation.

Second year/Advance Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Rotation:

This rotation is a continuation of the first year PTSD training. It will include some assessment, with a larger focus on provision of individual and group psychotherapy. It will provide opportunities to learn about effective and innovative trauma-focused evidence-based treatments such as Prolonged Exposure and Cognitive Processing Therapy. The details of this rotation can be arranged with the individual supervisor.

VITAL (Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership)

Supervisor: Dennis “Aaron” Ahern

Dennis “Aaron” Ahern, Ph.D.

Dennis.Ahern@va.gov

Description of VITAL:

In recognition of the fact that veterans face unique challenges and obstacles in the university setting, the VITAL program was established to aid student veterans on campus. The Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership initiative or VITAL program is committed to aiding student veterans in adjusting to the academic setting, helping veterans to overcome obstacles that might impede academic success, and supporting veterans in completing their educational goals. The VITAL program is specifically focused on connecting veterans to appropriate services on campus and within the VA system, providing education and training to faculty and staff about veterans’ needs in the academic setting, participating in outreach to student veterans and campus and community partners, and providing mental health treatment to veterans on campus. The VITAL program is relatively new to the Salt Lake VA, and has been providing services to student veterans at the University of Utah, Weber State, and Salt Lake Community College for over a year. The experiences and opportunities available to interns and practicum students through the VITAL program are quite broad. Interns in the VITAL program will be expected to participate in and help develop a variety of outreach and training events, and to carry a caseload of therapy and testing cases on campus. Outreach and training events range from tabling at events on campus to developing collaborative relationships with campus and community partners to presenting at national conferences. Practicum trainees are welcome to participate in the programmatic and outreach efforts. Additionally, trainees will work with veterans to address their general mental health concerns. Furthermore, they can also expect to provide empirically based treatment for PTSD, and to conduct testing for learning disabilities and ADHD. Depending on the trainees’ interest, opportunities for research, program development, and supervision are also available. They will also receive training related to educational benefits, community and campus resources available to student veterans, providing appropriate referrals to VA and community providers, enrolling veterans in the healthcare system, and developing collaborative relationships with community and campus partners.

Supervision:

Weekly one hour individual supervision with primary supervisor.